Depot Town Rag

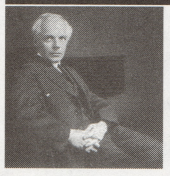
Volume 23, Number 5

July 2008

Let's get a beer somewhere

100% FREE *RAG* CONTENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198



Viktor Janos Bartok

Wiley Ann Arbor readers who wish to disguise their reading material may fold this page to reveal a feature on the Hungarian composer and pianist, Viktor Janos Bartok (1881-1945), one of the greatest composers of the 20th century and also a founder of the field of ethnomusicology, through his analytical study and ethnography of folk music. Less tightly-wrapped readers may continue below....

Bar Talk

-From Denver's 5280 *slicker, February 2008*

"Bars are often confused with restaurants. It's a common mistake that can be avoided by understanding the main difference: Restaurants are destinations; bars are not. The best restaurants, through their food and fame, will draw people from across the city, the state—or sometimes the country…

"Bars are local joints. Regardless of whether they're swanky cocktail lounges or dingy holes-in-the-walls they attract people who live, work, or play nearby to come in for a beer or three. Bars, like parks or libraries, belong to and reflect the surrounding blocks in the best ways. The crowds, the décor, and the staff are familiar, inviting, and inherently of a neighborhood. The best bars are like second homes—with draft beer...."

Disclaimer: Due to Ypsilanti's small town, mid-western size and style, many of Depot Town's bars are *also* destination restaurants. And some are *destination bars*. Denver may still be trying to catch up.

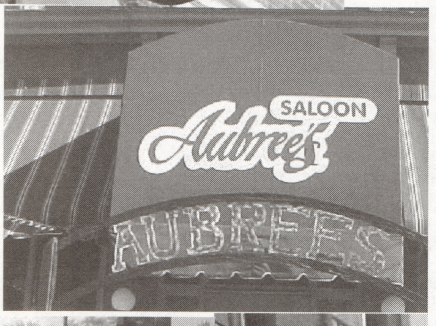
Depot Town enjoys "more bars in more (interesting) places" than some neighborhoods, but we're not unique. All good neighborhoods have favorite watering holes; so does Ypsi's historic Depot Town. This issue's reviews turn from the excellent food offered at our establishments and invite Regular *Rag* Readers to sit at the bar with us for a few rounds…

Carrie Nation in A², 3 May 1902

"I have been to all the principal universities of the United States. At Cambridge, where Harvard is situated, there are no saloons allowed, but in Ann Arbor the places are thick where manhood is drugged and destroyed."

--Carrie Nation, in her memoirs (1905)

More bars in more *interesting* places



This place sure looks familiar

1800 Publicans ran unlicensed operations: drinking cabin, tavern, inn, ordinary house

1900 State controls oversaw liquor sales: ale house, boarding house, bar, lounge

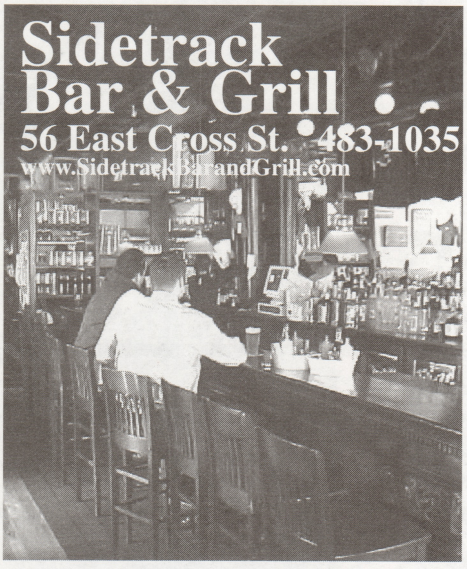
2000 Big Box franchises established restaurants & hotels...and other establishments that *looked a lot like* taverns & inns

Liquor license glut imminent! What happened to "the neighborhood friendly"?

In April, Tom Gantert reported in *The Ann Arbor News* that, "with 1200 businesses in downtown Ann Arbor, the city now has 807 new liquor licenses at its disposal…" with the creation of a "developing district" offering restricted licenses for only $20,000.

There are currently only 415 active licenses in Washtenaw County. Ypsi's historic Depot Town has been able to continue its developing district with only four such licenses.

Ken Wozniak, spokesman for the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, compares A² to downtown Grand Rapids where they recently received the okay for 2200 new liquor licenses – with only 1084 businesses in their downtown district.



This railroad tavern has kept its original purpose but sanitized it considerably over the years. Many customers like to tell of a grandfather who "worked for the railroad," but nobody applauds when the trains go by. Depot Towners pretend they don't notice. This is definitely not Ann Arbor.

Recognized by GQ magazine for "One of the TOP TEN hamburgers in America," Sidetrack's national reputation does not eclipse their hometown ambience. "The Track" maintains its place as one of the area's top quality eating and drinking places

Three outside patios are popular afternoon spots for train-watching at this eponymous location.

Don't believe Garrision Keillor's reports from Lake Wobegon; his "Sidetrack Tap" is fictional. Linda and Jessica French's place down in Ypsilanti, Michigan's historic Depot Town is the real thing.

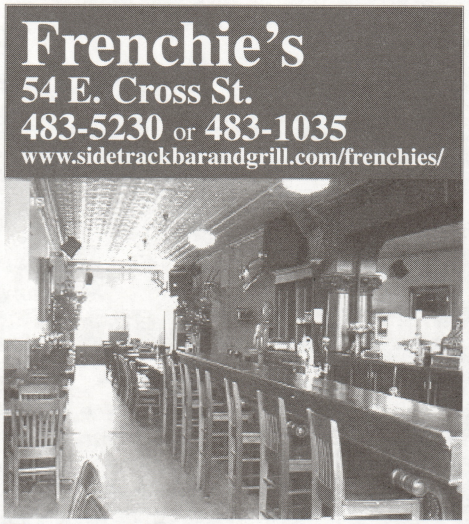
We're in the thick of transportation history

Motor Cities national Heritage Area is an affiliate of the National Park Service dedicated to preserving, interpreting and promoting the automotive heritage of the State of Michigan. National Heritage Areas are places where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape arising from patterns of humanity. The programs of Motor Cities are designed to increase tourism, develop and deploy educational programs that tell the story of the American automotive industry and labor, and encourage revitalization through conservation.

MotorCities' color brochure and map shows Ypsilanti's Auto Heritage with twelve fascinating examples in and around this old neighborhood:

- Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum
- Michigan Firehouse Museum
- Ypsilanti Historical Museum
- Yankee Air Museum
- Tucker House
- RM Auctions
- Haab's Restaurant
- Bomber Restaurant
- Chick Inn Drive-In
- Bill's Drive-In
- Sidetrack Bar and Grill
- GM Hydra-Matic Plant

MOTOR CITIES NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
www.motorcities.org



The beautifully renovated antique bar in this party hall is served by the sumptuous Sidetrack kitchen in a space once occupied by Depot Exchange Antiques and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). Frenchie's Website claims this establishment is named for owner Linda French, who was "born in 1864 to a Charleston socialite."

That "Charlseston socialite" is Nancy the mother of Linda, Gerry, Bill, and Skip, and she can be seen at a side table in her daughter and granddaughter's place regularly.

Frenchie's is available for private parties of 40-60 people for which no cover charge is allowed. You can even request a live piano player for your elegant shindig.

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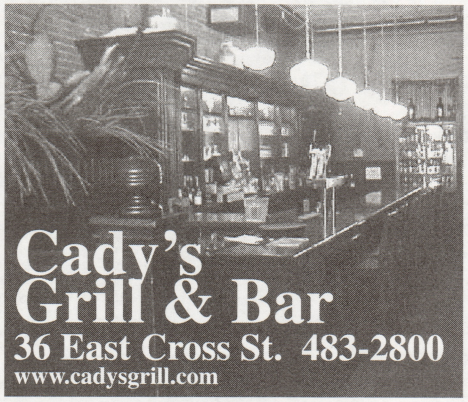
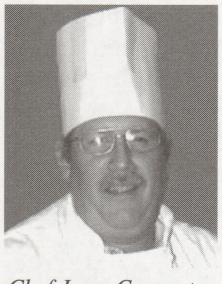


Cady's Grill & Bar

36 East Cross St. 483-2800
www.cadysgrill.com

This remote bar is hidden at the rear of the former Sinkule's Market. Noted for its excellent food preparations, Cady's bar is low-key and intimate; just turn at the fireplace and look for the waterfall. The bar is on your left. Or come in the back door from the parking lot and you're already there.

Out front, there's great al fresco dining and, in the back, a hidden garden for a romantic dinner experience.



Chef Jerry Carpenter

Cady's new owner and chef is Gerald Carpenter. Originally from Traverse City, Carpenter's culinary skill has taken him from coast to coast, including Florida, Massachusetts, California, Washington D.C., Pennsylvania, Missouri, Wisconsin, Ohio and Kentucky.

Carpenter was trained at the Culinary Institute of America to develop creative dishes for your dining pleasure.

His 30 years in the hospitality industry include: Buena Vista Palace at Disney World; the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids; and Ann Arbor's Weber's Inn.

Cady's GRILL & BAR

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new menu ▪ superb collection of wines

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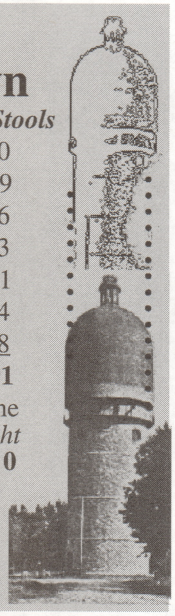
Bar space in Depot Town

Bar	*Feet*	*Stools*
Aubree's	75'	20
Cady's	27'	9
Corner Brewery	60'	16
Frenchie's	22'	13
Sidetrack	22'	11
Stick's	32'	14
Tiki Bar	23'	8
TOTAL	**261'**	**91**
Nearly *twice as long* as the YCUA Water Tower *height*	**147'**	**0**

Now try to imagine the Water Tower holding 250,000 gallons of beer! **How many bar stools would it take....?**



[Hard] Cider House Rules cleaned us up

When the French brothers bought their dad's Alibi Bar around 1970, they were determined to clean up the clientele's roughneck reputation. They stopped serving favorite drinks, pulled favorite tunes from the juke box, and no longer opened at 7a.m.

But three subtler rules changed things even more, they say:

1. Slide a napkin under every serving of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer
2. No "f-words" or you're kicked out
3. Hire pretty barmaids

It took two years, but these simple standards brought about massive changes.

Hot stuff here

At the request of Depot Town restaurants, Ypsilanti's Frog Island Brewing Co. created a special BBQ sauce intended to surpass commercial grade sauces and to leave the restaurant clientele begging for more. It worked! Not only did they want more, they wanted to buy it for home use. This great Barbecue Sauce remains a local phenomenon, unavailable outside a limited distribution area.

Find this special BBQ sauce online via Paypal or from Frog Island Brewing Co., Ypsilanti, MI 48197.

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Aubree's Saloon

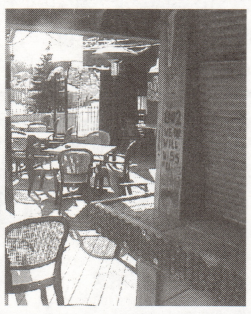
39 East Cross St. 483-1870
www.aubrees.com

Now the flagship of a far-flung pizza empire, Aubree's Saloon has retained much of its original flavor. The Saloon's newest bar configuration wraps a "Friends-like" horseshoe around from the former railroad saloon into what was once Weber Drug. The drug store was the last business on the block to still use an inside stairway to the residence above, but all that's gone now.

Upstairs Sticks bar

Instead, you'll find **Sticks Pool & Pub** upstairs in the former Oliver House where railroad workers lived until the 1970s. This creative space has evolved into a fancy Victorian pool parlor and pub.

Out the second floor back door there's the **Tiki Bar**, a tropical-themed rooftop bar, upstairs and in the back that overlooks our infamous depot. Party down as you watch the trains go by and hope they don't hit the Michigan Central Railroad depot again. [Come to think of it, what harm could it do?]



Outdoor Tiki Bar

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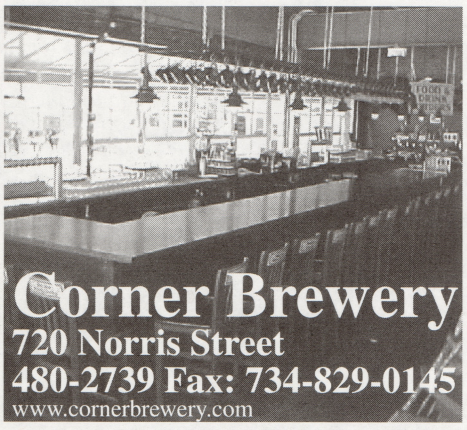

Who would ever have looked for a brewery and beer garden in the administrative offices of the Motor Wheel Corporation? Welcome to the Corner Brewery and Beer Garden! Owners Matt and Rene Greff say their operation is "sort of like a reverse mullet - with the party up front and the business in the back."

The Brewery's public space is a sunny bar and tasting room with a big outdoor beer garden and covered deck. Behind the scenes this is a production brewery producing and bottling Arbor Brewing Company beers for distribution throughout the state.

In addition to beers brewed for distribution, they usually have a few special treats available only on tap at the Corner.

The Brewery offers up to eight house-brewed beers on tap in the pub. Brews likely on tap this summer include:

- Brasserie Blonde
- Olde Number 22
- Phat Abbot Belgian
- Red Snapper Amber Ale
- Sacred Cow I.P.A.
- Tally Wacker 80 Shilling Scottish Ale
- Tree Fort Beer

Historical bar joke:
Old buildings, like old jokes: the older, the better

Old Man Murphy had worked down at the brewery for years, but one day, he just wasn't paying attention and tripped on the walkway, fell over into the beer vat and drowned.

The foreman thought it should be his job to inform the widow Murphy of her old man's death. He showed up at the front door and rang the bell. When she came to the door, he said, "I'm sorry to tell you, but poor old Murphy passed away at work today when he fell into the vat and drowned."

She wept and covered her face with her apron and after a time, between sobs, she asked, "Tell me, did he suffer?"

"I don't think so," said the foreman. "He got out three times to go to the men's room."

In the next Rag:

YesterFester monuments to our historical heritage and an exposé of George W. Ferris, the big wheel at the fair...

Depot Town Rag

A monthly publication of the
Depot Town Association, Inc.
400 Market Place, The Old Caboose
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
To the editor: thomasdodd@comcast.net

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Gary McKeever, President
Merrill Guerra, Vice President
Andy French, Treasurer
Sandee French, Scy. & Past President
Website: www.depottown.org
DTA meets at 6:30 p.m on the third Wednesday of each month at RealKidz, Inc. 35 East Cross (next to Aubree's).

All the pub's a stage

From Phil Proctor in May 2008 Funny Times

What began as a fluke to get around a statewide smoking ban in Minnesota is spreading like the flu! The ordinance, which went into effect last October, permits performers to smoke during a theatrical production, so bars have been producing "theater nights" in which patrons are cast as actors and the whole bar is turned into a "stage."

Criminal defense attorney Mark "The Chimney" Benjamin created the concept and supplied a "how-to-stage-a-theater-night" packet, though many bar owners have been spreading the word through smoke signals.

We're a rock bar," says owner Brian "Wheezy" Bauman, "and the majority of the people who come here smoke. We have a karaoke night and we have our rock night. Now we will have our theater night."

Health Department officials are waiting for the state attorney general to weigh in but state legislators who championed the ban were confident that the loophole would be plugged by a chaw. Yes, sadly it may already be curtains for theater nights, though native Minnesotans assert that no matter what happens, "The snow must go on…."

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All bar bets are on

A bar bet is a bet made between two patrons at a bar and, if you sit at the bar long enough, you are sure to see such a challenge. Bar bets can range from wagers about little-known trivia like obscure historical facts, to feats of skill and strength. Since bar bet losers usually buy the next round of drinks, the bets are typically intended to trick the other party into losing.

Some famous bar bets

• The annual Midnight Sun baseball game played in Fairbanks, Alaska (the only game to be contested after midnight without the use of artificial lighting) was established in 1906 as the result of a bar bet.

• Two books by Tony Hawks, *Round Ireland With A Fridge* and *Playing The Moldovans At Tennis*, were written describing Hawks' attempts to win two bar bets.

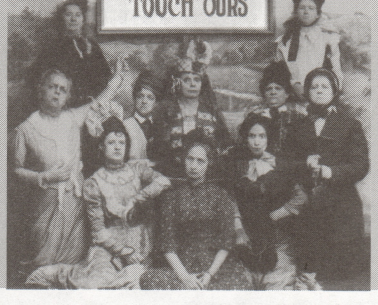
• The film *To Have and Have Not* is supposedly the result of a bar bet between Ernest Hemingway and Howard Hawks, with Hemingway betting Hawks couldn't make a good film from Hemingway's worst novel.

Rumor dispelled:

Wikipedia says it is widely believed that the creation of Scientology was the result of a bar bet between L.Ron Hubbard and Robert A.Heinlein. Scientology critic Lindsay, says this is "definitely not true," no such bet was ever made, it would have been "uncharacteristic of Heinlein" to make such a bet, and "there's no supporting evidence"—unless you consider several of Heinlein's autobiographical and biographical pieces written by his wife, which makes this claim repeatedly.

Where were you in 1919?

If you were around in 1919 just before prohibition started and came upon the poster at right––why would you quit drinking?



Bar sues church

-Jack Minzey contributes this ironic, unverified—but fascinating—report

In a small Texas town, a new bar opened their business in a new building. A local church started a campaign to block the bar from opening with petitions and prayers. Work progressed, however, right up until the week before opening when lightning hit the bar and it burned to the ground.

The church folks were rather smug in their outlook after that, until the bar owner sued the church on the grounds that the church was ultimately responsible for the demise of his building—either through direct or indirect actions or means.

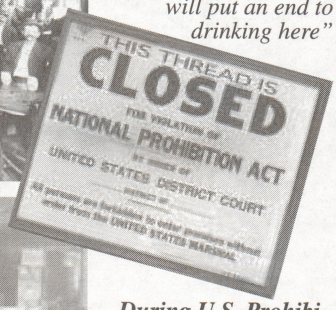
The church vehemently denied all responsibility or any connection to the building's demise in its reply to the court.

As the case made its way into court, the judge looked over the paperwork. At the hearing he commented, "I don't know how I'm going to decide this, but as it appears from the paperwork, we have a bar owner who believes in the power of prayer, and an entire church congregation that does not."

Prohibition again? Don't bet on it!

1890: *"I'll bet they'll let our neighborhood militia use this place for a rifle range forever"*

1920: *"I'll bet this will put an end to drinking here"*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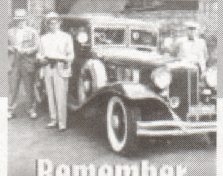
During U.S. Prohibition of Alcohol: *"I'll bet they'll never think to look for these barrels in the basement"*

The Twenties: *"I'll bet they'll never close THIS speakeasy. It's the most popular place in town. Right, Mr. Mayor?"*

Detroit Police photo: *"I'll bet they thought we'd never find this hootch"*



1933: *"Now that it's legal again, I'll bet we can drink a truckload a day here!"*

Disclaimer: *All the contemporary bar photos in this issue were taken during the morning clean-up hours which may be why they look so unfamiliar to the regular clientele.*

Ypsilanti Historical Society
Museum and Archives
(free admission)

Hours: 2:00 to 5:00pm
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220 North Huron Street
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www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org
Museum: 734-482-4990 *Archives: 734-217-8236*

Find back issues of *The Rag*
www.depottown.org

Toby Keith says,

"I love this bar
It's my kind of place
Just walkin' through the front door
Puts a big smile on my face
It ain't too far, come as you are
Hmm, hmm, hmm I love this bar"

No apologies:

A guy walks into a bar

A soccer ball walks into a bar. The bartender kicks him out.

Charles Dickens walks into a bar and orders a martini. The bartender asks, "Olive or twist?"

A man walks into a bar. OUCH! You'd think he would have seen it!

An amnesiac comes into a bar. He asks, "Do I come here often?"

A guy walks into a bar with jumper cables. The bartender says, "You can come in, but don't start anything!"

A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says, "A beer please, and one for the road."

A termite walks into a bar and asks, "Is the bartender here?"

A goldfish walks into a bar. The bartender asks, "What can I get you?" The goldfish says, "Water."

Shakespeare walks into a bar and asks the bartender for a beer. "I can't serve you." says the bartender. "You're Bard!"

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Honey...Pooh's Favorite! Yummy! Come see Pooh and some of his friends.

Ypsilanti's Farmers' Market
In historic Depot Town

WEDNESDAYS 3 p.m.-7 p.m. thru October 29
SATURDAYS 8 a.m.-2 p.m. thru October 25

RAGTIME

Remember when…

…everybody drove to town on Friday nights and angle-parked and window-shopped and chatted with all their friends and neighbors?

All that's changed!

Now it's *Thursday* nights:

CRUISE NIGHTS

And *Tuesday* nights:

MOTORCYCLE MANIA

And lots of weekends, too:

4, 5, 6 July
CAMARO SUPERFEST
2nd annual Super Camaro event. This year's event features the '67 Camaro.
www.camarosuperfest.com/info3.shtm

9 July *7 p.m. Wednesday*
JAZZY NIGHTS
WCC Community Jazz Band
Frog Island Park

11, 12 July
MICHIGAN ELVISFEST
All DTA members on Cross & River Streets are eligible to have a booth at the Festival. 734.483.4444 for reservations.

14 July *7:30 p.m. Tuesday*
STARS & STRIPES FOREVER
Ypsilanti Community Band
Riverside Park

25, 26 July
11th SUMMER BEER FESTIVAL
2 days this year! Michigan micro brewers come to let you sample their wares.

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We also recycle!

Before Ethanol, our pioneers *drank* their extra corn crop

1825 – Benjamin Woodruff added a room to his cabin at Woodruff's Grove to be used as a tavern to welcome arriving settlers. The Whitmore House soon followed

"The distilleries of Ypsilanti, as in every pioneer American community, utilized the surplus corn of the neighborhood. Probably every merchant kept liquor on sale in his store and stood treat to his customers when they paid their bills. Sometimes, too, the sales were primed with a friendly glass. Whiskey was the customary lubricator of social intercourse." –Harvey C. Colburn

1826-1831 – First distillery

1827 – *Perry House* (burned in 1868)

1827-8 - *Old Colby House*

1829-1831 – *Alvin & William Cross* distillery (Cross Street named for them)

"...having raised more grain than they could otherwise dispose of, [the Cross brothers] built and operated a distillery, continuing in this business for two years. After that time, under the influence of an itinerant lecturer, the town experienced a notable temperance revival, and the Cross Brothers closed their distillery business, cut up the copper boiler and converted the tubs into bins for grain." -Colburn

1861-1876 – Jacob Grob, first brewery, becomes the *Eagle Brewery*

1866 - *F.J. Swaine's Malt House*; a portion of the brick building still stands at 111 E. Forest

1869 – *The Grove Brewery* established by Taufkirth and Trockembrod.

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